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EDITORIAL NOTES

ORGANIZATION OF SECTION L

Four years ago there was organized in the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences a Section of Education. This section, designated as Section L, has received the support of four classes of members. First, there are those who are interested in science teaching. They come in some measure from the other sections of the Association and in some measure from the Federation of Mathematics and Science Teachers which meets with the Association. Second, there are members of Section L who are interested in the problems of college education and find no other educational organization devoting itself to the scientific investigation of college problems. Some of the most productive work of the section has been on college problems. A third class of members is drawn from the ranks of the psychologists who usually meet with the Association. The psychologists are often working on educational problems and have held two joint sessions with Section L for reports on papers of common interest. Finally, there is a fourth class of members, the professional students of the science of education. The number of such members whose chief work is in the science of education is not large, but the section promises to become a center of influence which will help to increase the number and prestige of such students.

MEETINGS IN PAST YEARS

The section has listened to two vice-presidential addresses by Commissioner Brown in which he outlined the special work which such a section can undertake and one by Professor Dewey in which he discussed the relation of science to education. A notable symposium was held in 1908 on the problems of modern college organization, and at the last meeting during the closing days of 1909 sessions were held where much significant material was presented looking toward the formulation of a science of education.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON COLLEGES

One of the features of the last meeting was the report of a committee on the sizes of classes in colleges and on the election of courses by college students. This committee had gathered some material from colleges and universities of various grades. The variation in the size of classes was set forth in detail and attention was called to the lack of principle in determining the distribution of the time and energy of instructors. Special attention was called to the necessity of modifying the rating of courses in view of the possibility of individual attention to the students. A course in which there are only six students evidently provides very much more instruction per student than one which includes two hundred, while in estimating an instructor's work the course of six means less work by far. The committee also presented tables showing the amount of concentration and dissipation of interest in the election of courses by students in various colleges. The results here showed many remnants of the old required course and indicated also the tendency of students to take advantage of any opportunity to elect courses preparatory to professional schools.

TABLES SUGGESTED FOR GENERAL USE

More important than the results presented by the committee was the suggestion that colleges be induced to prepare such material in tables which shall facilitate the comparison of many institutions. Professor Thorndike prepared, as chairman of the committee, sample tables which if adopted in presidents' reports would render very easy elaborate studies of problems touched on in the report.

METHODS FOR OTHER INVESTIGATIONS

Other significant matters were brought forward. Without attempting to give the details of these other reports, it may be said in general that the section stands for exact and definite information as distinguished from mere opinions in matters of education. The collection of such definite information necessitates the critical discussion of methods and the careful sifting of results. Whenever a report of scientific work in this field is presented it contributes to the common stock, not merely new information, but additional methods. Those who are looking into the future of education will be more grateful for these methods than for the immediate results.

SECTION L AS A CENTER FOR THE SCIENCE OF EDUCATION

The purpose of this discussion is to call attention once more to the strong movement now tending in the direction of a science of education. Section L, like all of the agencies contributing to this movement, found its first support in the other sciences and in the interests of those who contributed indirectly to the science of education. Here, as elsewhere, however, as the subject was given some attention its importance and its right to independent cultivation became apparent and in the brief period of its existence, Section L has demonstrated the vitality of the science of education.

C. H. J.